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ABSTRACT

The first paper in this booklet summarizes the desegregation strategies that have been used either singly or in combination to ethnically balance schools. An overview of the services and resources available to school districts from the National Center for Research and Information for Equal Educational Opportunities is also presented. Some of the recent information available regarding the effect of school desegregation on children, particularly minority children, is reviewed. The second paper discusses the role played by its author in drawing attention to cultural differences which exist between ethnic groups in New Mexico. The methods, that her Cultural Awareness Center uses in working with school personnel to demonstrate the meaning of the unique behavior styles of the various minority group children, are described. Several ways to impose cultural pluralism on a monolithic social system in a practical and effective way are discussed, including seminars, workshops, teacher development programs, and curriculum and attitudinal changes. (Author/JM)

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Process Vs. Status
in School Desegregation

by
Edmund Gordon

Using Cultural Differences
for Educational Success

by
Mari-Luci Jaramillo

From the
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PREFACE

The National Conference for Directors of University School Desegregation Assistance Centers brought together leaders across the country to discuss the progress and events of school desegregation. For three days many aspects of desegregation problems were examined. Some of the sessions featured presentations that seem to have special value for school administrators and teaching personnel. Two of these are published in this bulletin.

Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, Columbia University, summarized the desegregation strategies that have been used either singly or in combination to ethnically balance schools. He also presented an overview of the services and resources available to school districts from the National Center for Research and Information for Equal Educational Opportunities of which Dr. Gordon is director. This Center works in close association with the ERIC Information Retrieval Center on the Disadvantaged, also located at Columbia University.

In his talk Dr. Gordon reviewed some of the recent information available regarding the effect of school desegregation on children, particularly minority children. He pointed out that evaluating integration involves the social structures of the community, both in and out of school, and the process of people interacting. Most desegregation studies have been concerned with measuring the status of change by achievement scores and grade level advancement.

Referring to recent research findings showing negative effects of ethnic mixing on the learning behavior of certain, low self-concept, minority children, Dr. Gordon supported the idea of separate schools for some children. Separate, he was quick to point out, should not be equated with segregated and should be used to enhance, not replace, a pluralistically integrated school system.

Dr. Mari-Luci Jaramillo discussed her role in drawing attention to cultural differences which exist between ethnic groups in New Mexico. She described methods that her Cultural Awareness Center uses in working with school personnel to demonstrate the meaning of the unique behavior styles of the various minority group children. If properly understood and rewarded, she pointed out, these differences could be used as channels to increase academic success rather than to underscore failure.

Dr. Jaramillo said that desegregation of children was not a problem in her state but that integration of either the classroom or the curriculum was lacking. The need to impose cultural pluralism on a monolithic social system in a practical and effective way was the central theme of Dr. Jaramillo's remarks. She suggested several ways that her Center was working to accomplish this. These include seminars, workshops, teacher development programs, and curriculum and attitudinal changes.

Both Dr. Gordon's and Dr. Jaramillo's presentations were given as informal talks at the National Center Directors' Conference in Anaheim, California, January, 1972. The following bulletin is an edited transcript of those talks.

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Process Versus Status in School Desegregation

by

Edmund W. Gordon *

I have been asked to talk about exemplary programs, public school integration, and national research and dissemination in this area. I've interpreted this assignment to mean that I should tell you about the program of the National Center for Research and Information on Equal Educational Opportunities. We call it NCRIEEO. I will discuss some of the exemplary programs that we have identified related to school desegregation. And I gather you want me to discuss the status of desegregation research.

Technical Assistance in School Desegregation

NCRIEEO is the technical assistance arm to the Division of Equal Educational Opportunity of the U.S. Office of Education. We have many functions that are similar to functions of an ERIC Center. The ERIC Center on the Disadvantaged is located at Teachers College, Columbia University, where I am and it exists as a parallel resource to our Center.

NCRIEEO is charged with the dissemination of information through training and consulting functions, generating and publishing documents relating to school desegregation, interpreting research reports, and

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evaluating programs occurring in the field.

Information Dissemination

The dissemination function is discharged primarily through two publications. One is a document we call Equal Educational Opportunity which is the newsletter of the Center. Each issue discusses some essential topics and includes a bibliography and some other targeted resource information. We also publish something we call a "Tipsheet" which is much briefer than the newsletter. It is pamphlet addressed to a particular school problem such as discipline, or redesigning of school boundaries, where the purpose is to place in the hands of teachers or administrators or school board members some specific information about a particular problem in desegregation or equal educational opportunity.

We also generate a variety of bibliographies. These are developed by our research staff where all of the articles and books related to a particular issue are reviewed, annotated, summarized. The best of these are listed and organized in bibliographies that are made available. The Office of Education picks up the cost of these publications so they are made available to you at no cost. School-related people may request to be placed on the mailing list.

As a special service for persons who may be isolated from sources of some of the documents they need, we do provide a reprint service. If there is an article or a section of a book that you need in a hurry and you can't get it, you can call us. We will xerox it, send it out to you and simply ask that you pay for the cost of xeroxing.

Training Programs

I mentioned the training activities of the Center. Actually this year there are three categories. The first two are workshops for pupil personnel specialists whom we have determined to be among the many people in the schools who could be particularly helpful in facilitating a process of desegregation and integration. They are in the position of being third-party reconcilers of difference. They certainly work with parents. They work with teachers. They work with students. We are particularly interested in getting an amplifier effect so we want to attract persons who are themselves in contact with other guidance people, either in supervisory or training functions so that what they learn in that workshop can be transmitted to other persons.

The third category of training coming out of the Center is a plan for two or three regional meetings in which the resources of the Center and some of our consultants will be made available to practitioners in the field at various locations around the country.

Outstanding Desegregation Programs

Now let me turn quickly to the second issue. It has to do with exemplary desegregation programs. My staff has been analyzing a number of reports. We visited several programs in the past year and I must say this area gives me some problems. I find it hard to conclude that a particular effort is exemplary. If you say relatively exemplary, yes. If you say that it's really on target, this is a first-class effort, I have had to conclude that I haven't seen that kind of program. Last year, for instance, we did identify four such locations. We thought that they deserved having attention called to them for a variety of reasons. We published a little report on the four programs across

the country that we decided were reasonably good. We thought that they at least presented issues that were worthy to call to the attention of other people in the field. That report had been out about two weeks when I got a call from the Legal Defense and Education Fund asking if I could have conference with them. They raked me over the coals for having identified three of those spots because it happened that the Legal Defense Fund had them in litigation. So that while some of the things they were doing were important, even outstanding, other aspects of their program presented problems at least for one segment of the population and, unfortunately, the target population they were concerned with.

So the problem of identifying exemplary programs is a difficult one. We don't really have good criteria for exemplary function and truly exemplary examples are kind of hard to come by.

Strategies for Desegregation

As you know, there are several strategies that have been used in desegregating schools. I'll run over them briefly and try to identify some places where I think these strategies have been implemented with enthusiasm and some creativity. You also probably know as well as I that while the major strategies tend to focus on organizational problems, the importance of this is reflected in the substance of the program, rather than the uniqueness of the organizational structure.

Changing Attendance Zones

We talk about geographic attendance zones, which is the creation of new geographic zones where boundaries are drawn in a manner that promotes the maximum desegregation and where some form of transportation, usually busing, is used to move persons from larger areas to

schools that have previously been segregated. Now Evanston, Illinois; Berkeley, California; and Tacoma, Washington on a much smaller basis, are examples of such programs. The program in Tacoma is a much better example of the magnet school, which we will talk about in a couple of minutes. The changing of geographic boundaries is a device for bringing a greater variety of persons together.

Again I want to remind you that the organizational change is not as important as the elements of program that go on in the schools as a complement to that organizational change. If I took the time to review the Berkeley program with you, you would see that there are just numerous things that have been done within schools, within the community that deal with the preparation of teachers, the preparation of children and the preparation of parents. All these were essential to the successful functioning of that operation. So that the change in the boundaries is only the beginning. The substance of the program that goes into that re-organization is the critical issue.

Pairing of Schools

Much can be said for school pairing which is another strategy, where you bring two schools that previously served predominantly different populations together and by re-organizing the grade structure you get ethnic mixtures of youngsters that would not have been achieved if you had kept the schools separate. There was a report last week in the New York Times on the pairing experiment in New York City. The board had simply paired schools from two adjoining communities, one which was predominantly white, the other predominantly black. Over a period of about five years, an exodus of whites from the adjoining white community continued. It may even have been accelerated. There is a question as

to whether the white exodus accelerated because of pairing or whether that is a process that would have gone on anyway. But, of course, one of the problems with pairing, as is one of the problems with desegregation in general, and one that we haven't found a solution to, has to do with the impact on the use of the public schools by higher-status persons.

Pairing is one of the approaches to desegregation, but again, pairing is the organizational element. The substance of it has to do with what actually happens in that school to accommodate the special needs of the youngsters who have just been brought together.

Magnet Schools

Other strategies are the central school, the magnet school, and the educational park. All of these are efforts at bringing together in a single place, either an excellent educational resource or a massive educational resource and maybe we ought to separate these. The excellent educational resource, the magnet school, as in Tacoma, Washington, is an attempt to create a school that is so good, so attractive, has so many resources that people want their youngsters there. The effort at reducing ethnic separation in Tacoma has been successful. In other words, the magnet school there seems to be good enough to retard the movement away from that school district by whites and to stem the avoidance of that school by white kids.

The Educational Park

The educational park is slightly different in that instead of being a small, good school, it is a large, let us hope, good educational complex where persons from a large area are drawn in. It is not unrelated to the emerging concept of the metropolitan school district where school

districts are actually being enlarged in order to increase the variation in ethnic and economic status of the youngsters for whom the district is responsible.

I guess the most recent, and probably will be the most controversial, of these is the case down in Richmond, Virginia, where a judge ruled that the suburban areas around Richmond and the Central City Richmond School District must be combined into a single district in order to achieve a higher degree of ethnic mix. As I understand it, that case is being appealed and probably the issue won't be resolved for another year. But some people have indicated that the only way that we can massively attack ethnic separation in public education in most of our cities is to move toward the larger school district, the metropolitan district, because the residential patterning of ethnic and economic groups is such that as long as we maintain relatively small districts, we are not going to be able to break out of the segregated pattern by any legal means.

Those are the major devices that have been used. I think I've indicated that Tacoma, Washington is a reasonably good example of the magnet school. Incidentally, if you do not have access to the information on these, this is the kind of information you can get from our Center. We can give you details on what is happening in each of these desegregation strategies. Rochester, New York has the metropolitan plan. New York City has an educational park; it also has paired schools. Riverside is an example, I guess, of a central facility with a number of related efforts that are improving educational opportunity.

Recent Research

Now in looking at the status of desegregation from recent research we find most of the studies focusing on the loss or gain recorded in achievement

scores for ethnic groups. In these generally the target population, that is the minority groups that have been integrated, has shown modest to substantial gain in achievement. The majority group, or higher-status group population, has suffered no great or sustained loss in achievement and that does require a comment. As you know, many parents of higher-status youngsters argue against desegregation on the basis of their assumption that their youngster will be less well educated in these new settings. The data seem to show that there is generally an increase in achievement level for the lower-status group and the maintenance of achievement level for the higher-status group.

Socio-economic Mix Related to Achievement

There have been a few studies in which the higher-status group has actually continued to accelerate its achievement. There have been a few in which there has been a temporary drop in the achievement of the higher-status group. In the follow-up studies of those projects however, it seems that after about a year the pre-experiment achievement level of the higher-status groups is re-achieved. So that we do not have real evidence to suggest that white kids or rich kids or higher-status kids are harmed by being educated with lower-status or minority group kids. There is substantial evidence to support the conclusion that lower-status kids tend to achieve at higher levels when they are exposed to education in settings where they are in the minority and higher-status persons are in the majority. Where the low-status group continues to be the majority, even though there is some element of desegregation or integration, the achievement for the lower-status group tends not to be high and sometimes is unchanged.

It appears that if one were looking for a formula, one would want to move toward those patterns of mix where the higher-status group

continues as a majority in that setting and the lower-status group is in the minority, rather than creating integrated or desegregated settings in which the lower-status group is in the majority and you have desegregated by moving in a few higher-status persons.

One might argue or conclude that what you have happening here is that the majority group kind of sets the norm for what teachers do and for what kids do and, as is the case in most social situations, the pattern of functions for all members of the group tends to gravitate toward that norm. If you've got lower-status kids receiving their schooling with higher-status kids, they are likely to gravitate toward the norm for the higher-status group. If though, one turns to the problem of individual functioning and individual achievement in such settings, we've got another whole set of problems. And this might be a way of getting into the last thing for which I was responsible--a discussion of some problems of research.

Research on Performance of Low Status Children

If you are not familiar with work of Irwin Katz[1] it is worth looking up. Katz is a social psychologist. He has worked primarily in laboratory experiments, but he has devoted the past five-six-seven years to an investigation of the impact of ethnic mix on intellectual functions. Dr. Katz' work indicates that for some lower-status persons the circumstances under which they either are tested or educated or expected to perform greatly influence the quality of that performance. For some of the minority group kids, when they knew that they were being compared with higher-status persons, white kids, or when they were tested in the company of higher-status persons, their achievement dropped. These youngsters responded negatively to the threat of being compared to

higher-status persons.

Early Findings on Integration Show No Improvements

Another related study is included in the work that Nancy St. John[2] did for our Center, a position paper that was published in the Review of Educational Research, Volume No. 1, 1970. Dr. St. John looked at youngsters who had received most of their education in integrated settings and youngsters who had recieved most of their education in segregated settings. She was looking at the youngsters in her study who received most of their education in segregated settings and were achieving at a higher level than were those youngsters who received most of their education in integrated settings.

Those data were collected in the late 1950's and the early 1960's and if you go back and look at the areas that she was drawing her population from and if you recall the politics of that period, you find that you are dealing with a number of recently desegregated schools. She included in her list a number of schools that were in the North which were in areas that could be characterized as areas in transition. And it may be that what was happening, what she was getting in terms of the higher achievement for the youngsters in segregated schools there was a measure of the stability of the community and the schools that youngsters were going into, rather than a measure of integration itself. In other words, if most of her population came out of schools where there was strife and tension and confusion around the processes of integration or disorganization in the community because of its changing nature, the depression in achievement may have been a function of those circumstances rather than a function of the fact of integration.

The Katz' data present a different kind of problem and relate to a

phenomenon that has emerged in the latter part of the 1960's and the early 1970's, that is the growing national cultural concerns of minority groups. It is a phenomenon that simply has to be considered when we talk about the problems of ethnic integration in education.

Separate But Not Segregated

I believe that there are some kids, some minority group kids, who are better off in separate schools. I think if they are in a period or stage of their development where ethnic identification, the need to get themselves together, is very prominent, it may be that all of the advantages that the integrated educational experience can provide for these kids is the opportunity to continue in a separate, but not segregated institution. I think we should make a distinction between separate institutions with respect to race, and segregated ones. One is voluntary; the other is enforced by the legalities of the society. I suspect that some of these kids are actually better off in separate schools.

Concern For Self Worth

Some of you probably know that since the late 1950's I have been worrying about the problems of compensatory education, what are the ways in which education ought to be reformed to serve certain segments of the population more effectively. And as I have observed programs and practices all across the country and even the literature from aboard, I haven't found many organizational approaches that have been more effective than some of the efforts that some unpopular black groups have achieved, such as Black Planthers and the Black Muslims.

While I have problems with some aspects of some of their assertions and some of their politics, it does seem to me that they caught on to

something when they utilized concern with respect for self, concern with renewed awareness of one's own worth and potential as a vehicle for upward movement. The data seem to show that the Black Muslims and the Panthers have taken some of the most disorganized, uneducated, distorted of our black youth and have made responsible citizens, law-abiding citizens, if you can overlook their militant rejection of segregation. They have rehabilitated these fellows, and I think the essential core of it has had to do with the relationship between what they have come to believe about themselves in learning situations.

Now, as I look around at the black youth in particular and at what has been reported to me about some Puerto Ricans, some native Americans, that is American Indian Kids, I sense this self worth as a kind of untapped resource that schools have simply not made enough use of. There probably are enough kids who have a need for improved self identity for us to think about at least beginning their education or providing for a major segment of their education in settings where this becomes a major feature. If that means a separate learning situation, then I would endorse it.

Let me elaborate on that one because it is really kind of a touchy subject. I am fundamentally, and basically, not even an integrationist. I believe in the pluralistic society. And I don't like to support those structures that tend to place people apart but those that bring them together with respect for the integrity of each of the parts. But the experience in this area, I think, is so important that we ought to consider it at greater length.

Stages In Societal Development

There is an anthropologist over at Penn State University, Anthony Wallace,[3] who talks about the role that education plays in societies during different stages of their development. He identifies these roles as including the development of intellect, intellectuality; the development of skill; and the development of morality. He argues that in the revolutionary stage of any society, morality is the principle concern of that society, and education serves that purpose. What is the right thing to do, what is good for the people, what is the humane thing to do?

The moral issues identified in the revolutionary period tend to support the creation of unrest and dissatisfaction with the abusive aspects of that society. The revolutionary society places this emphasis because it wants to develop recruits; wants to develop people now who will help to make things better. Revolutionary society places its next greatest emphasis on what Wallace calls intellectuality, that is, understanding things. And this is important in revolutionary periods because you want people to understand. Again, if they can understand issues, they can be rallied to the side of "right." The least emphasis is placed on skills. They figure that skills will be important some day but you can work on that after you've consolidated the revolution.

He argues that in the conservative period you put skills at the top of that list, because what you are trying to do then is to maintain the system. You put morality second, because it is important that you socialize the members of the system; that you come to know what is expected of you. Intellectuality is third, because you don't want to

create too much free thinking. You might disturb the balance if people are thinking too much.

He asserts that the reactionary period is much the same except that it puts morality again at the top of the list. Morality now, according to Wallace, has to do with what the society expects of me? What is the law? How can we maintain law and order? Skills are next because they are needed to maintain the system. Intellectuality is last, because again you don't want people really understanding and thinking because they may disturb the status quo.

Now there are some people who argue with Wallace's analysis. But if there is any meaning to it, and if we try to apply it to the problem of education in a very complex society like our own, it is quite possible that we have segments of that society that are at different stages of their development. The society is not at a single stage. I happen to think that the dominant character of the U.S. society is conservative and has been conservative for, you know, at least 100 years. And you may already guess that I even suspect that it is tipping toward the reactionary side now. It is certainly not revolutionary.

Sub-cultures at Different Stages

If you ask what is the mood of the black people in this country, or what is the mood of Mexican-Americans, or any of the depressed and disadvantaged minority groups, it is certainly not reactionary and it is certainly not conservative. What we hear most is revolution, if you think of radical change as being revolutionary.

Now, if the dominant character of the education system serves the dominant need of the dominant elements of the society, what you've got is an education system that is servicing conservative ends. If it is

now to be applied to a population that has as its primary concern revolution, I argue that there is an incongruity here that doesn't fit. If we believe that for people to derive their maximal benefit from learning they have to be involved in it and have to have the sets that are serving their ends, I'd say that large segments of the minority population are probably right in being reluctant to become enthusiastic about integration. They see integration as counter-productive to their ends. And if I am to take seriously my belief that the way in which I feel about myself and the way in which I feel about my learning experience, is an important piece to be considered in the design of learning for me, I have to say maybe we've got to separate these kids from that mainstream system which may be running in the opposite direction and thus having adverse effect on their development.

Evaluation of Process As Well As Status

When it comes to evaluating the impact of desegregation and integration, one simply can't look at the number of persons who are involved or pre- and post-scores. One has to begin to be concerned with a number of the interacting variables that have to be taken into account, not only in assessing what is happening, but what should have been taken into account in determining what was going to happen.

A report that I was tempted to spend a lot of time in talking about this morning is the study by Thomas Pettigrew.[4] Tom Pettigrew has looked at the process of desegregation. One of the problems of research in this area is that we have given most of our attention to status studies in this area and very little to process studies. Professor Pettigrew calls attention to the importance of combining status studies with what we might call ecological studies in which we begin to concern

ourselves with the situation, the conditions, the context in which certain processes occur. He wasn't looking so much at these processes as they apply within the schools as he was looking at their occurrence in the communities.

Influence of Community Factors

Pettigrew reports that one can predict the way in which efforts at integration will go, based upon the politics of the community, its level of urbanization, its economic structure, the particular ethnic groups that are there, the level of education of the ethnic groups, and most important, the self-perception of these several groups. He suggests that we no longer generalize with respect to self-perception by social class status.

He refers to the relatively good position of the skilled worker in the U.S. society right now and one would have thought of the relatively good political position of this group five years ago. But Pettigrew reminds us that this is the group that views itself as not getting the proper attention from government. It views itself as reasonably comfortable but not secure. It views itself as a low-status group in terms of the professed emphasis that has been given to intellectuality and culture in the society. This group has emerged as the major conservative force in the society. The same group that in the late 1930's and early 1940's was most identified with the liberal wing, you know, the organized labor of the country. Supporting the New Deal, supporting the Democrats, etc., this group now has emerged as the supporters of Wallace, supporters of our present administration. They see the kinds of needs and problems that are reflected in their self-concept best protected by those political entities.

No Stereotypes

Now Pettigrew argues that it is a mistake to generalize with respect to these populations in the concept of old stereotypes concerning their views, their positions, their political alliances. It is important to understand the way in which they perceive themselves and it is from that understanding one can make a more appropriate prediction with respect to the way in which they treat matters of desegregation.

Moving back to the educational processes, we are beginning to have evidences that suggest that the same phenomenon operates for teachers, and the same phenomenon operates for youngsters. The way in which one perceives oneself, the way in which one thinks he is percieved by others influences the way in which he functions. So that if one is talking about desegregation and integration, a part of the planning should consider the ways that the teachers who are going to be the leaders or the implementors of the process, and the youngsters who are going to be the recipients of the process, perceive themselves and perceive their role, and perceive the process itself.

The Nature of the Teaching-Learning Process

Another neglected area of research has to do with the nature of the learning and teaching transaction. If you go back and look at the Coleman Report,[5] Coleman was able to conclude from his data that variations in the quality of schools contributed very little to quality of achievement. I think Jim Coleman thinks that the finding is wrong. I'm convinced that it is wrong. I think his data support it, but when you look at the way in which that setting was designed you see that it was not sensitive to the process variable in teaching-learning transactions.

There was no provision for tapping the nature of the interactions

between youngsters and teachers, teachers and youngsters and teachers and teachers. It may be that the quality of that transaction is important for achievement. But the number of desks or the number of books or the quality of the science lab may be relatively unimportant. I am suggesting that when we try to look at the impact of desegregation, unless we have studies that look at the nature of the learning-teaching transaction, we may be getting false or less useful data. There is the problem of the way in which the self is used in teaching and of the nature of the interaction between youngsters.

In one of the studies done for my office in connection with Project Head Start, I think it was Wolff and Stein[6] who were talking about the differential treatment provided youngsters in post-Head Start classrooms based upon the presence or absence of Head Start experience. The Head Start youngsters were somewhat more sophisticated than the non-Head Start youngster. For some teachers, these were the youngsters who got all of the teacher's attention--those were the better teachers. The less able teachers devoted most of their time to the non-Head Start youngsters, the youngsters who had not had Head Start experience. But the nature of that attention was not instructional. It was custodial, managerial and disciplinary. Now unless one is looking at the way in which teachers use themselves and the way in which youngsters use themselves in these learning situations, we distort our data when we try to look at the impact of a change process.

When we consider that in the process of desegregation we find there is often resegregation in the classroom based upon, I think, mistaken concepts of grouping, the phenomenon becomes even more important. One must find out what is happening to which youngsters in this newly-de-

segregated situation. They may be in what is considered to be, politically and socially, a more wholesome environment; but the actual treatment that they are getting may be inferior to the treatment they were receiving before.

Let me remind you of Kenneth Clark[7] who was looking at the relative achievement of black kids who were educated in Southern segregated schools and black kids who were educated in integrated Northern schools. This was in the 1950's. He found those kids coming out of the good, segregated high schools for the blacks superior in their achievement to the youngsters who were in the supposedly better, integrated schools in the North. But when one looked at what went on in those schools, one could see the basis for his findings. It wasn't that the integrated experience in and of itself was inferior, but that the quality of education in that integrated experience was certainly inferior.

Integration, Attitudes, and Societal Change

Let me wind up by suggesting that in our concern with planning for desegregation, and I have tended to emphasize desegregation, I think that integration in education is still a long way off. It is a long way off, in part, because the interactions between persons of different ethnic groups and different economic groups tend to be more a function of the kinds of attitudes bred by the society in which they grow up. I think we make mistakes if we think that schooling alone can speak to this issue.

As long as the society is organized in ways that permit individuals and groups of individuals to exploit and have societal-enforced advantages over other groups, I think it is possible to reduce the distance between kids and the distance between teachers and kids and teachers and teachers.

But it is certainly not possible to eliminate it. We kid ourselves when we think that the kinds of things we are doing in education now are going to change those things. In politics or group relations or ethnic relations, the kinds of things that kids learn at home and, of equal importance, the kinds of things that are the dominant messages of society, are the things that really determine their attitudes. At the same time restructuring the school and improving the learning experiences in the schools, we must be generating concern for humanitarian treatment of all people. And unless we can begin to create those kinds of society structures and organizational forms that force behavior in the direction of respect of non-exploitative interaction, I do not think that our efforts directed at making the school the focus of change are going to amount to too much.

I don't want to suggest that we not do it because it is not happening in the other area. But I do want us to remember that the goodness of what we do may be undercut by the badness of the society in which we do it. And unless we can do something about these sides of the equation, much of the effort may be wasted.

Finally, as we look at the evaluation of these efforts, if we would remember that we don't want to do away with some of things that logically seem to be important because the data do not show that they have resulted in changes in test scores or changes in feelings about school. It may be that they are right--it may be that they are necessary--but they are just not in themselves sufficient to the task. There may be some things outside of the school that we also need to be trying to change in order to achieve a level of sufficiency.

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USING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

by

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At the University of New Mexico's Cultural Awareness Center we work to sensitize people to cultural differences of the ethnic groups that we find in our state. Our school population is made up of approximately 38% Mexican Americans, somebody who looks like me; 10% Indians; 3% Blacks. The rest are "others." We service our groups in that order. Our big concentration is on meeting the educational needs of Mexican Americans. We have six full-time people to service 89 school districts. Of the 89 school districts, we have serviced all except one at least once.

Need for Curricular Change

Our problem is not bringing people together. We're in the classrooms together already. But we sit there and we glare at each other. That's our problem! We need curricular desegregation. The curriculum in New Mexico is meant, by and large, for the middle-class, Anglo child. And our teachers are too, because we've all been trained in the same monocultural institutions. Therefore, even if a teacher's surname is Spanish she may still think like a middle-class, Anglo teacher because she has been prepared in the same institutions. What we are trying to

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do is sensitize all people to the idea that not all children are alike. That's our big thing! We're working on trying to get people to develop mutual respect and understanding; that there's no group that's superior; no group that's inferior, even if they are different. We are trying to preserve our differences. We are striving for cultural pluralism in New Mexico. We don't know if it will work.

Cultural Differences

Our job then is to make people aware of our cultural differences and we do it through a series of activities. We use both content and process in our seminars to try to convince people to change their attitudes. And, as you know, this is very difficult. Most teachers punish children who don't behave in a certain way. There are many, many behaviors that we exhibit strictly because we're Mexican Americans. It's not that we are stubborn or anything else--the culture has forced us to act in a certain way.

I'll briefly give you a couple of examples of the behavior I am talking about. In the Spanish-speaking community we sometimes use the reflexive. What does this mean in differences in outlook? It means that in my culture, things may happen and I don't cause them to happen; as opposed to the Anglo culture where everything that happens takes human intervention. So we don't get to the airport on time. "I didn't miss the airplane--the airplane left me!"

We try to show teachers that Mexican American children don't feel they cause some of the things that happen in the classroom. Like maybe homework disappeared, pencils got broken and on and on. A teacher

insensitive to this cultural difference could say, "Look, you children, you're wrong because you don't have guilty feelings about this thing that happened." And that's the biggest pressure the teachers have now: "I'm not a good teacher because students don't feel guilty about the things I want them to feel guilty about." We use examples like the above to demonstrate that teachers need to be open to many behavioral patterns.

Returning to the Spanish world, have you noticed the way our men greet each other? They greet each other with a great big hug and a kiss! And I assure you there's nothing wrong with our men! But if Anglo-Americans do this constantly, you begin to wonder! Cultural differences in action!!

Understanding Behavioral Differences

Take the above activity into the classroom. What happens? We don't have the space concepts that Anglo-Americans have. We have not decided, as Anglos have, that this is my space and that is yours. If your chair is too close to someone else's, somehow you manage to scoot a little, because you have a given space, as opposed to those of us who do not have the same space limitations. We have much physical contact. I remember at one of our seminars a principal stood up and said, "Now I understand," after we had discussed the space idea at length. It seems that he was at a junior high school and the boys kept getting awfully close to him and he was very uncomfortable. And just a little tiny bit of information got him to understand a cultural difference slightly better! Hopefully, he pursued it in detail so that he would understand

how we use space in many other situations.

Take an Anglo man; put an apron on him, put him in the kitchen, and get him to help with the dishes, and he doesn't lose one ounce of masculinity. It's allowed in the Anglo culture. Put that apron on a Chicano--something has happened to him! Let's just say he's acculturated!

Rewarding Diverse Cultural Behavior

Take the use of time--Anglo time runs. All of you have heard that and it means that it is fast, speedy, future-time oriented. In Spanish, "el reloj anda," our time walks...here comes that sleepy-eyed, sit-under-the-cactus, manana type. You get the picture? But look what we do with the concept when working with teachers. We say, "Is it not true that in your classroom the students that get the rewards are those who do things well and fast? " And everybody nods! Those are the children who get to go to the easel, get to read the library books, go out to recess early and all these other goodies! What happens to the students that come from a culture where time is used for developing human relationships instead of material "achievement"--achievement that means outdoing somebody? Who gets punished? We work from the angle of pointing these things out. From there we work into rewards and punishments.

We are trying to get teachers to create dual situations in their classrooms: (1) students would be rewarded for doing things fast and well, which is the way it is out in the world; and (2) get rewarded for doing things well and never mind how long it takes you to do it! We're working toward cultural pluralism and we're attempting to get teachers

to try this with all students, not just Chicanos. We feel this is an asset for the Anglo-American child also.

Learning Styles

We also concentrate on getting teachers to understand the learning styles of the Chicano. For example, the Chicano child will work much better for the glory of the group instead of his own. That's not the way it is set up in our classrooms now. Now you've got to knock somebody else down do you can be "top dog" in the classroom. And Chicanos don't operate that way! We work much more happily in group situations. We work like that for our families or for our peers. So this is a vital part of our learning style.

Creativity

Our children are much more protected by our mothers than their Anglo counterparts. For example, our tots get to Head Start or whatever else you call your particular program, and some cannot tie their shoes or do other similar tasks. Our students cannot do several of the things that the Anglo mother has taught her children to do. Why? Because the Anglo mother has been trying to encourage her offspring to be independent while we practice some things that foster dependent behavior a little longer. We don't want to cut the apron strings! So what happens--the teachers "look down" on our children instead of accepting our styles, our ways of learning, our ways of doing things.

Much of the current research is showing that Chicano children are more creative than their Anglo counterparts--more creative! We tell longer stories, we fib much better, we add more characters to our tales!

We're trying to get teachers to capitalize on this instead of saying, "Those poor little Chicanitos, they don't know all the things they are supposed to." Look at us from a positive angle and say, "These are all the things they already do greatly."

Historical Backgrounds

We work some on "history." Not very much because we think that it is a lost cause to talk about how great we were. We don't have any Super-Chicanos in 1972! We simply have beautiful human beings. We do talk about history to put us in focus, in the right perspective; but we don't harp on that. We want to concentrate on who we are now. We were rural people. We're now urban. Many things have happened to us that have brought profound changes. But again, we give very specific examples to teachers. This is why we call all our work "technical assistance." Whether we're doing it in seminars or out in school districts--all of our work is technical assistance.

As an example of the above, our director points to the treatment that is given Kit Carson. In New Mexico Texts he's a big hero! He killed a lot of Indians. So our director asks, "Wouldn't Kit Carson be a bigger Anglo hero if we said that Geronimo, his Indian adversary, was a great guy, too? And that he, too, had ideals and that he, too, had many people following him. Wouldn't that make Kit Carson a greater Anglo hero?" We work from this angle, trying never to tell teachers, "What you are doing is wrong." We keep saying, "What you are doing is okay, (and we wink), but if you try some of these changes, it may help." We do not go into a system and say, "Do it our way." That can't happen in our area. We do it all by a "positive" approach.

Weekend Seminars

We attempt to sensitize toward these things through weekend seminars. Our director, John Aragon, has mostly Chicanos working for him with a couple of token Anglos! And he's decided that Mexican labor is cheap so he sometimes makes us work on weekends! We work all week out in the field and then on the weekends, on Friday nights, Saturdays and Sundays through half-day, we have what we call our weekend seminars. In these seminars we attempt to give people opportunities to interact in groups. We put them through many processes that the teachers may pick up for their own classroom use. Also, they are exposed to techniques that they may use in working with their colleagues. Of course they are given much content also.

Each one of us has a presentation of 45 to 50 minutes and it's like a three-ring circus. John says, "Now you're on!" And we come in with overhead projectors, screens, chalkboards, banners and music and all those other things. (That's not quite true, but almost.) Then we have small group discussions. For small group discussions, we hire trained discussion leaders. The first evening's activities concentrate on Blacks. That's a safe topic in New Mexico because everybody says, "Yeah, that's the way it is in Alabama or Mississippi." And so it's very safe. We use "Black History: Lost, Strayed or Stolen," kind of a shocker. And later in our small group conversation, before you know it, our leader has changed the topic to the Mexican Americans; "Isn't that what we're doing right here in Albuquerque, New Mexico?" See, we've led them from some place where they felt safe to home where they can't escape.

The following morning we work with the educational needs of

Mexican Americans. John and I do large-scale presentations followed by small group discussions. In the afternoon, our Indian experts come aboard and they do the same thing with the Indian educational needs. This is followed by a presentation of statistical evidence on minority group school achievement.

By Saturday night the people have decided that we are overdramatizing...that we are saying these things for shock effect--it can't be this bad! At supper time, we invite three students from campus, a Chicano, an Indian and a Black. John gives them one instruction. He says, "We are going to meet with a group of about 50 teachers. Would you tell them what the schools have done to you and for you?" And the students tell it like it is! Then the teachers begin to say, "Hey, the Center wasn't dramatizing it half enough!" These students mince no words! Many times they have had teachers in the audience as teachers. So the pressure really comes on!

After the student presentations, we divide into small groups and the students go with them so that they can respond to questions. By then--we've "got" the majority of the participants. They're with us and they're saying, "Yes, we must help!" We're at a stage now where when you attempt to get people to like each other, you sort of have to do it with subversive activities. We're "sneaky."

For the last day's activities, we have cooperated with TEDTAC and have produced a short slide presentation called "Three Men of the Southwest." Maybe some of you have seen it. In it we present the terrible things that happen when people don't understand each other. Then it has a "Pollyanna-ish" ending demonstrating that when people do cooperate and talk to each other and tell each other what they

think, they create some understanding. We use that slide presentation to put our people back together again.

We finish with a fish bowl evaluation and you've all seen that. The staff sits in the inner circle with two empty chairs and all the participants sit in the outer circle. Our director starts questioning us on what we think happened in the seminar. Then people start coming in to react. We hear things like: "No, I don't agree with that!" or "Yes, I agree," or "This is the worst seminar I've ever been to! Nobody has ever accused me of being a racist before!"

Sometimes we have a lot of success and people come in and really talk about things they have done in the past and how they are going to change. Sometimes, we're a total failure! We may have a group of administrators come into the fish bowl and say, "This was a wonderful experience but really you should have had the teachers here because they're close to the students." At another seminar we may have only teachers and the teachers will say, "If only you had the administrators here. They make the decisions." That's when we know we have failed: when people aren't saying, "What can I do?"

Esperanza

That gives you a brief idea of what we are all about. We've been trying to work with what we call the Esperanza Model in some schools. For those of you that don't speak Spanish, "esperanza" means "hope." The word is culturally loaded. It is an inservice model that we've been trying to get schools to accept for implementation. The first phase makes people aware of their own needs and of cultural differences. The second phase makes people look at what's happening in their schools

and with their own teaching methods. We use Flanders' Interaction Analysis--these types of things. The last stage forces people to get to specific instructional activities, like team teaching and all those other goodies that we have tried to do in the past but by and large have failed with because we had not previously changed attitudes.

Instructional Materials

We have a few monographs that our Center has produced. I did something called Cultural Differences Revealed Through Language that we use with the teachers and also a monograph called Pensamientos, sort of an English as a second language recipe book. We also have one called "El Alma de la Raza" by Sabine Ulibarri which talks about the role of the woman in the Spanish culture, bull fighting, the church, and many other topics such as these.

These publications are available in limited quantity. You can write us if you wish to receive them. We have a deep personal interest and commitment in providing ideas and materials that will help people understand the Chicano culture.